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PAGE:2335

INQUIRE=DOC6D

ITEM NO=00279733

ENVELOPE

RGTMZYUW YEKOKOA0555 2461450-MIDO--YEKDQX.

DE YEKADL #8284 2461252

ZNY MMIDO

ZKZK RR AAZ DE

HEADER

R 021247Z SEP 88

FM CIA/OSWR

TO DIRNSA

SSO FTD

SSO DIA//KEEP AND PASS OSD/C3I/MR LATHAM

SSO DIA//PASS TO SSO SDIO MR LEVEN

SSO DIA//PASS TO USD/A MR GODWIN

NPIC

SSO REDSTONE

YEKADSC/NSC

SSO CHVILLE

NWS

DOEHQ

NTIC

STATE RCI//KEEP AND PASS ACDA

SSO USAF

WHITE HOUSE//KEEP AND PASS OSTP

WHITE HOUSE//KEEP AND PASS OSTP/DR RONA

WHITE HOUSE//KEEP AND PASS PFIAB GARY SCHMITT

CIA//PASS TO OIR

ZEM

CONTROLS

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SECTION 1 OF 8

CITE CIA/OSWR

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

SUBJECT: SCIENCE AND WEAPONS REVIEW CABLE,
SW SWRC 26 AUGUST 1988

X-----
USSR: ATTEMPTING TO IMPEDE WESTERN
TACTICAL LASER WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT?

THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER RECENTLY DELIVERED A
SPEECH AT THE UN ON THE NEED TO PLACE LIMITS ON NEW
DEVELOPMENTS IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, INCLUDING

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PAGE:2336

ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS. THE SPEECH IS THE FIRST POSITIVE SOVIET RESPONSE TO A PROPOSED BAN ON THESE WEAPONS INITIATED IN 1986 BY SWEDEN. THE NEW SOVIET POSITION MAY BE INTENDED TO ASSUME THE "HIGH MORAL GROUND" ON THE ISSUE AND TO IMPEDE US PROGRESS ON DEVELOPING SUCH WEAPONS. [REDACTED]

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PAGE:2337

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X-----
1. USSR: ATTEMPTING TO IMPEDE WESTERN
TACTICAL LASER WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT? [REDACTED]
RECENTLY, SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER EDWARD SHEVARDNADZE
DELIVERED A SPEECH DURING THE THIRD SPECIAL SESSION ON
DISARMAMENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) IN NEW YORK. DURING
HIS SPEECH HE REMARKED ON THE NEED TO PLACE LIMITS ON NEW
DEVELOPMENTS IN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. ELABORATING ON THIS
POINT, SHEVARDNADZE STATED:
WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION IN THIS REGARD IS THE PROPOSAL OF
STATES MEMBERS OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT ON THE CESSATION
AND PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL
ACHIEVEMENTS FOR DEVELOPING AND PRODUCING...NEW KINDS AND
SYSTEMS OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS. WE REGARD AS EXTREMELY
INTERESTING THE IDEA OF CONDUCTING A SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS FOR A TIMELY
ELABORATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ON PREVENTING THE USE OF NEW
TECHNOLOGIES FOR WEAPON DEVELOPMENT...THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN
THE FIRST PLACE WITH RESPECT TO LASER, GENETIC, AND
ELECTROMAGNETIC SYSTEMS. WE NOTE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
PROPOSAL OF SWEDEN TO BAN THE USE OF BATTLEFIELD LASER
WEAPONS FOR BLINDING PERSONNEL. [REDACTED]

THE SWEDES REPEATEDLY HAVE ATTEMPTED TO HAVE A RESOLUTION
CALLING FOR A BAN AGAINST ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS--BASED
ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS--BE APPROVED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY. THEY FIRST FORMALLY PROPOSED SUCH A RESOLUTION
DURING THE 25TH INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS CONFERENCE IN GENEVA
IN OCTOBER 1986 AS PART OF THE LAW ON LAND WARFARE. (THIS

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PAGE:2338

RESOLUTION WAS REJECTED BY THE CONFEREES AS A RESULT OF STRONG OPPOSITION FROM SEVERAL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE USSR.) [REDACTED]

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THROUGHOUT 1987, THE SWEDES SOUGHT SUPPORT FOR THIS RESOLUTION. FOR EXAMPLE:

X-- IN APRIL 1987, THE SWEDISH MISSION IN GENEVA HOSTED AN INFORMAL MULTINATIONAL MEETING TO REVIEW THEIR PROPOSAL. (THE SOVIETS WERE NOTICEABLY ABSENT AT THIS MEETING AND THE SWEDES WERE OPENLY DISAPPOINTED BY THEIR ABSENCE.)

X-- IN MAY 1987, AMBASSADOR BRITT THEORIN, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SWEDISH DELEGATION TO THE UN DISARMAMENT COMMISSION, STATED THAT SWEDEN CONSIDERED THE USE OF ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS "A CLEAR CONTRAVENTION OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES IN THE LAW OF LAND WARFARE."

X-- IN JULY 1987, SWEDEN CIRCULATED A "REQUEST FOR VIEWS" OF THE RESOLUTION THEY WOULD PROPOSE TO THE 42ND UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NOVEMBER 1987. [REDACTED]

COMMENT:

SHEVARDNADZE'S SPEECH IS THE FIRST POSITIVE RESPONSE BY THE SOVIETS ABOUT THE SWEDISH INITIATIVE TO BAN ANTIPERSONNEL LASER WEAPONS. UP UNTIL SHEVARDNADZE'S RECENT UN STATEMENT, THE SOVIETS AND THEIR WARSAW PACT CLIENTS HAVE BEEN SILENT OR WERE NEGATIVE ON THIS ISSUE. ALTHOUGH SHEVARDNADZE'S STATEMENT WAS NOT AN UNEQUIVOCAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL, WE BELIEVE THAT THE STATEMENT FROM A SENIOR SOVIET DIPLOMAT WILL ENCOURAGE THE SWEDES TO CONTINUE TO SEEK AND DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THIS PROPOSAL. THIS DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE SOVIETS FOR TWO IMPORTANT REASONS. [REDACTED]

FIRST, UNTIL THE STATEMENT BY SHEVARDNADZE, NO MAJOR POWER HAD ENDORSED THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL. IN FACT, IN PREVIOUS PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS, BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND THE USSR HAVE BEEN UNRECEPTIVE TO THE PROPOSAL. WITH THE SOVIETS ACKNOWLEDGING THE "IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL OF SWEDEN TO BAN THE USE OF BATTLEFIELD LASER WEAPONS," THEY MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO ASSUME THE "HIGH MORAL GROUND" IN THE EYES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. [REDACTED]

SECOND, STEADY ADVANCES BY MANY WESTERN NATIONS AND THE USSR OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS IN DEVELOPING LASER TECHNOLOGY MAKES THE FEASIBILITY OF ANTISENSOR-BATTLEFIELD-LASER WEAPONS A REALITY. THE SOVIETS, BY PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL, MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO COMPLICATE THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR WESTERN MILITARY LASER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAT THEY PERCEIVE ARE LIKELY TO PROCEED INTO FULL-SCALE ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. US RESEARCH AND WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE MUCH MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC SCRUTINY THAN

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PAGE:2339

IN THE USSR. THE SOVIETS MAY HOPE THEIR RECENT
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SWEDISH PROPOSAL WILL
SUBJECT US AND WEST EUROPEAN MILITARY LASER RESEARCH PROGRAMS
TO CLOSER PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND DEBATE, WITH THE HOPE OF AT
LEAST DELAYING ONSET OR SLOWING PROGRESS, IF NOT OUTRIGHT
FORCING THEIR CANCELLATION. THIS TACTIC WOULD BE ESPECIALLY
ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE SOVIETS BECAUSE THEIR LASER WEAPONS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND
OPEN DEBATE AND, THUS, COULD PROCEED UNHINDERED.

/***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 003 *****/



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